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The Shame of Spokane

By Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

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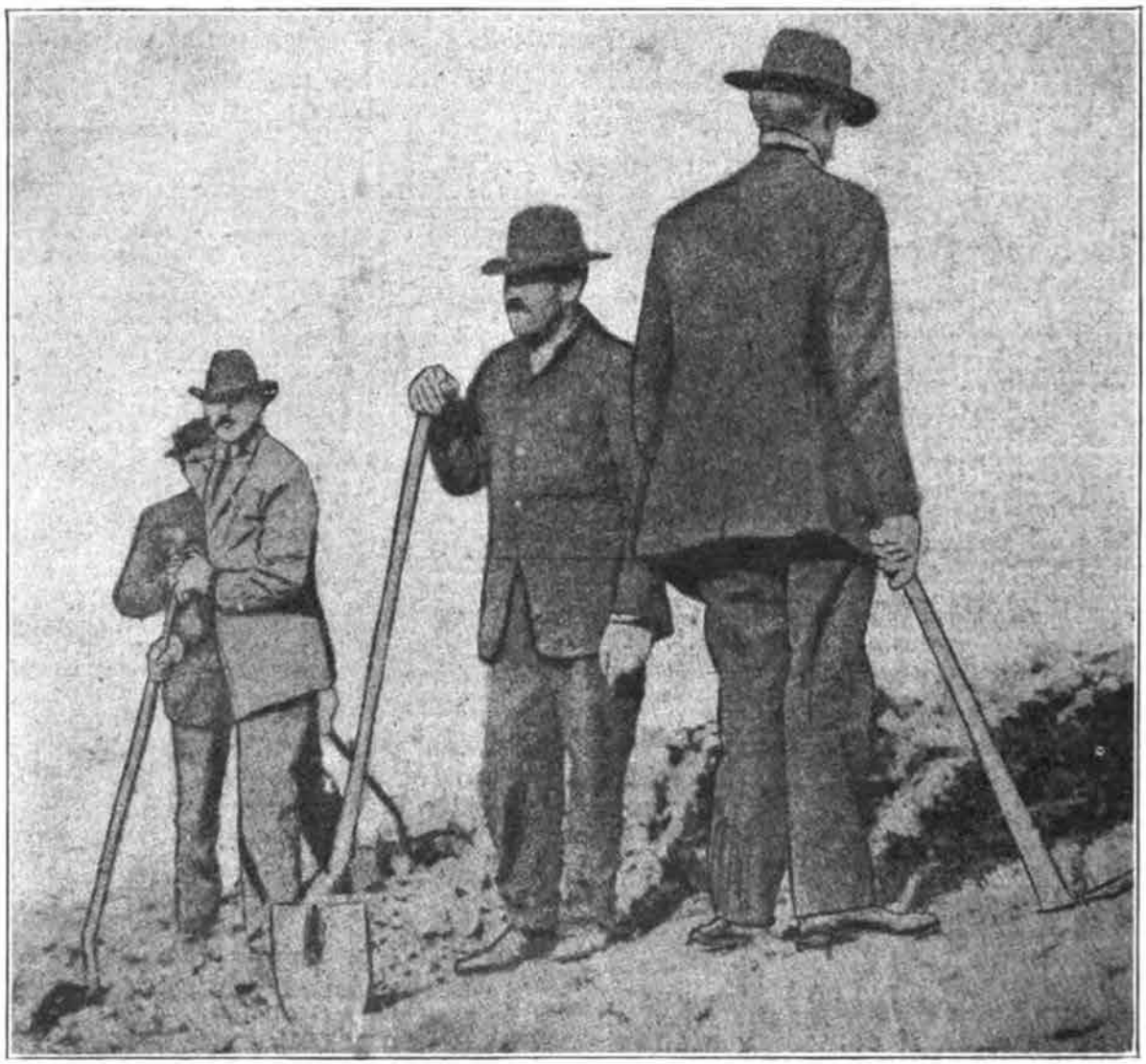


REPRODUCED FROM A MARKED COPY OF THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW KINDLY (?) SENT US BY CHIEF OF POLICE SULLIVAN.

ON December 3rd Prosecuting Attorney Pugh thundered, in his attack upon the Industrial Workers of the World: "Let them feel the mailed fist of the law," amply justifying our definition of government as **"the slugging committee of the capitalist class."** This threat was presumably made in a full appreciation of what a roaring farce "constitution," "justice," "rights" constitute in Spokane—city of the Washington Water Power Company and the employment sharks.

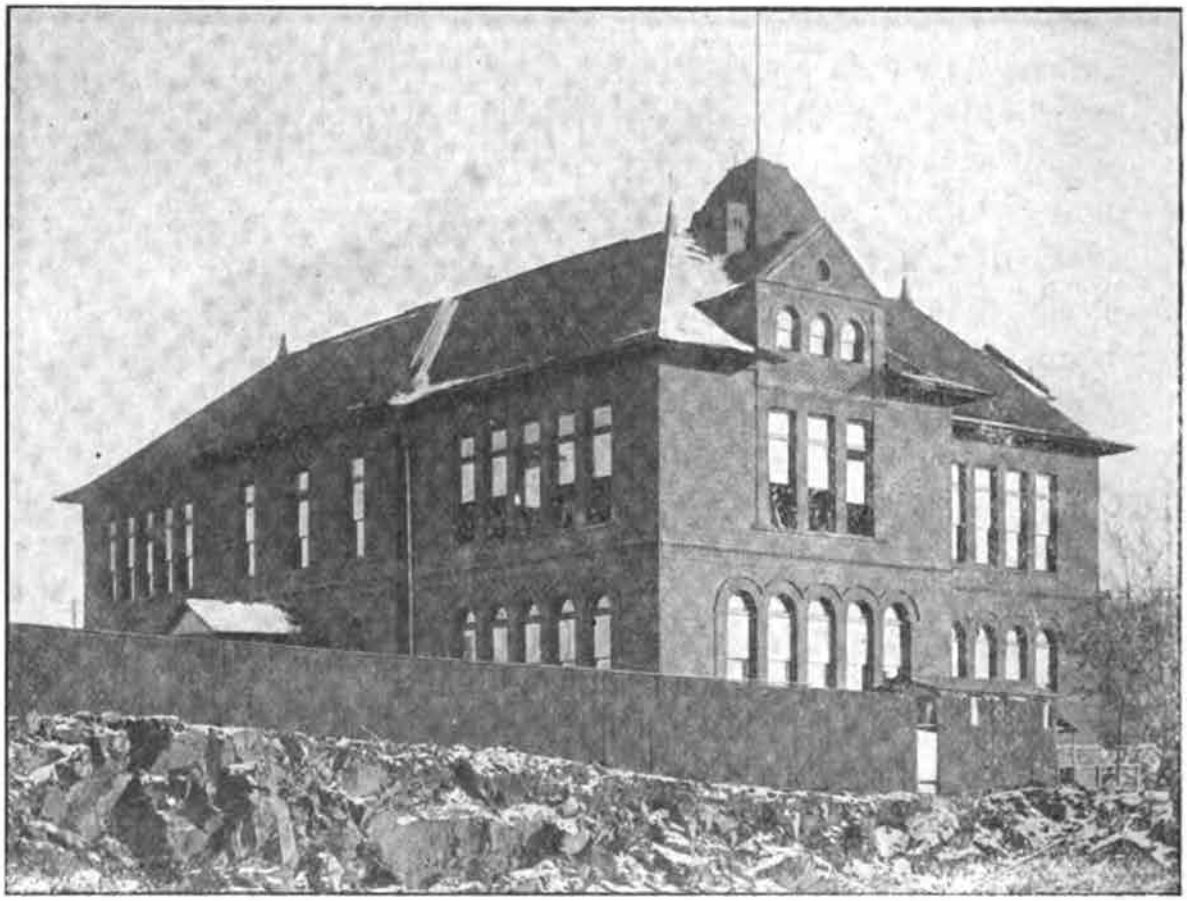
Since last writing for the Review we certainly have individually and collectively felt the mailed fist. Workingmen may come into this fight with respect for and faith in American institutions, but they will come out with every vestige ruthlessly destroyed by official acts and judicial decision. Free speech, free press, free assembly and the right of foreigners to avail themselves of the "benefits of our glorious government" (whatever that is) are non-existent in this western town. Outrage upon outrage has been heaped upon us—men, women and children—until the depths of indignation are reached and words fail to adequately express our intense feeling.

Every day men have gone upon the streets in numbers ranging from six to twenty-five and thirty, have said "Fellow workers" and have been railroaded for thirty days with a hundred dollars fine and costs. Ordered to work on the rock pile, and refusing, they have been given only bread and water in meagre rations. Bread and water for a hundred and thirty days means slow starvation, means legal murder, yet even on Thanksgiving day, the only exception made to the rule was to give smaller portions of more sour bread. The good, christian Chief of Police Sullivan sneeringly remarked, when asked if the turkey and cranberry dinner applied to all: "The I. W. W. will find the water faucet in good order." As a result of this diet the boys have become physical wrecks and are suffering with the scurvy and other foul diseases.

Once a week a day is appointed as "bath day" by the authorities, and the boys are brought from the Franklin School into the city jail in the interest of cleanliness. The newspapers have repeatedly informed the public that the I. W. W. men object to baths, and many a reader has turned away in horror, I suppose, from the dirty hoboes. The gentle and beneficent bath has been described as follows by a man who endured it: "First they strip your clothes off by force, then turn a stream of hot water over your head and shoulders scalding and blinding you at once, and then a stream of

ice cold water." This alternating process would probably be enjoyed as much by the critical editor of the Spokesman-Review as it is by the I. W. W. boys.

As the prisoners were being taken from the school to the jail the I. W. W., Socialists and sympathetic onlookers lined up along the streets and threw sandwiches, fruit and tobacco into the wagon. Officer Bill Shannon, in charge, took a fiendish delight in kicking this food away from the starving rebels. With face and form like an African gorilla, showing no sign of either human compassion or intelligence, he held back the weakened men that they might not catch the



FRANKLIN SCHOOL (JAIL)—FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF FREE SPEECH.

fruit thrown. When one man got a sandwich and held on with hands and teeth, strengthened by desperation, Shannon grabbed him by the throat and choked him till he dropped the food. Mrs. Frenette with others lined up near the school and sang **"The Red Flag"** to encourage the prisoners. She was arrested and tried for disorderly conduct, the Chief of Police and six other officers testifying against her. They swore that she acted as if she were drunk, that she had carried on in a disorderly manner on the streets since this trouble started, and one said she acted like "a lewd woman." Testimony showing that she had stood on a private porch and had taken part in an

orderly meeting was of no avail. She was requested to recite "The Red Flag" and did so with such dramatic force that the Judge was horrified at its treasonable and unpatriotic sentiment. She was sentenced to thirty days, one hundred dollars fine and costs, and Judge Mann recommended to the Prosecuting Attorney that a further charge of participating in an unlawful assemblage —a state charge—be filed against her. She was held for two days in the foul city jail, supplied with only the coarsest and most unpalatable foods and subjected to rigorous cross examination every little while. Bonds were put up by two local Socialists and she was released in a weak and starving condition.

Between three and four hundred men have now been sentenced for speaking on the street. At first the court room in which they were tried was open to the public, and spectators to the number of two hundred could be accommodated. But they didn't show a proper amount of respect for the official lights. One afternoon Attorney Crane was conducting his own case, wherein he was charged with disorderly conduct—speaking from his office window. In cross examining Chief of Police Sullivan he unexpectedly asked: "How much had you been drinking on the day of my arrest?" An irresistible burst of laughter swept over the entire court room, including the Judge and the Chief, but the excuse had now been found and the court room was ordered cleared. A partition was erected over night and the court is now so small that only a bare handful may be admitted. All the other public courts in Spokane that I have yet attended are of like character and the public are practically debarred from these "star chamber" proceedings. For additional precaution a bailiff is placed at the doorway, and I have seen him admit well-dressed lawyers and detectives while refusing to admit the wife of one of the men in jail, gruffly stating: "There are no seats."

The Spokane Chamber of Commerce, after a vituperative address by Mayor Pratt, passed resolutions unanimously de-

nouncing the I. W. W. City Comptroller Fairley has announced that the free-speech fight is taking a thousand dollars a week out of the city treasury. We can well understand the reason for our condemnation. The I. W. W. has unanimously denounced the Chamber of Commerce. We are lined up on different sides of the class war, and the feeling of opposition is mutual.

Members, presumed by the police to be influential, have been arrested as they quietly walked along the street and thrown in jail, sometimes for several days before a charge was filed. For the protection of some of these, writs of **habeas corpus** were demanded of Judge Hinkle. He refused absolutely at first, stating that he did not care to have his court tied up with a lot of labor cases. This flagrant abuse of an old Anglo-Saxon right caused a roar of protest in the public press and throughout the labor organizations. The Judge, after a few hours of serious "thought," recanted and gave two writs, one dealing with a vagrancy case, the other with a disorderly conduct case as tests. The reason for his reversal can probably be found in the fact that fees of four dollars apiece were demanded before the City Clerk would file the papers. This practically means if you have money you can protect yourself before the law; if you have not, you can stay in jail till you rot. Prominent lawyers in the city gave their opinion that such a hold-up was without precedent.

This same Judge Hinkle had made himself infamous in connection with the juvenile cases. Perhaps the most disgraceful affair of many connected with the Spokane free-speech fight was the raid on the hall December 1st, resulting in the arrest of eight little newsboys. Simple on the surface, it is a subtle attempt to undermine the right of a parent to teach a child ideas different from the established order. The children were taken to the chief's office and put through a severe cross examination, after which they were locked up for the night. "The third degree" on youngsters ranging in years from eight to sixteen is quite a credit to the Spokane detective force. Couldn't you get evidence from grown-ups, Captain Burns, throwing light on the "secrets" and "conspiracy" of the I. W. W. without scaring it out of a lot of little boys? "The I. W. W. hall is no fit place for them," said Prosecuting Attorney Pugh of these poor, ragged, little urchins who trudge the streets in their thin little shoes going in and out of saloons and cheap resorts all hours of the day and night. The parents of the boys wth that innate respect for law came in fear and trembling to say that they had not sanctioned the children joining. One woman said she was too poor to buy her boy a necktie so let him wear the red one that a man gave him. The parents knew nothing of the I. W.

W. and the little youngsters were rather deserted by the very ones who ought to know what's wrong with conditions that force them to send their little ones on the streets this frosty weather. One by one the youngsters succumbed and promised not to sell the I. W. W. paper or go near the hall. One notable exception was little Joseph Thompson. This little man bore himself with all the moral courage of a revolutionist straight through, refusing to retreat an inch. Over this boy the hardest conflict raged. Evidence was produced to show that Mrs. Thompson was in full accord with the I. W. W. and accompanied the boy to the hall. Judge Hinkle then remarked that, from his personal experience, **"the I. W. W. Hall is no fit place for a woman and no good woman frequents it."** "Besides," he remarked, of this clean, healthy, little youngster, "he looks dirty and uncared for." Language becomes inadequate and a horsewhip looks reasonable in face of this cowardly, scurrilous statement. If the condition of the judge's red and bloated face is indicative of his mode of life one may safely assume that his reputation as a notorious drunkard is not overdrawn, yet he is the guardian of juvenile morals, the critic of working women!

JOSEPH THOMPSON.

The next day, the cases being postponed for two days, Mrs. Thompson and her boy came to the court room where Mr. Thompson was expected to be tried. The probation officer called the boy out and his mother followed. He asked what the boy was doing there and she replied that she was accustomed to taking him with her everywhere she went. The officer retorted: "You are not a fit person to take care of the boy," and ordered the boy to go home.

In 1817 Shelley was deprived of his three children because he was an atheist. **Is the time coming in this United States when Socialists are to be deprived of their children because they are Socialists?** There is no insult too gross, no trick too low, no act too heartless for these brutal representatives of law and order to resort to. Who is to fix

the standard of what constitutes proper care for children and correct ideas to teach them—shyster lawyers, drunken judges and ignorant, illiterate police officers?

But Judge Hinkle overstepped the bounds when he said no good woman frequents the I. W. W. hall. Saturday, December 4th, saw his court room lined with men and women who visit the hall regularly, and many of the women were not in a pleasant frame of mind. The judge blustered around, tried to make amends and then summarily dismissed the juvenile cases. The whole affair, however, is but a straw to show the trend of modern capitalism. It will happen again and we must be prepared.

The conspiracy cases have been increased to eleven within the last month and we are continually reminded by the prosecuting attorney that more are to follow. Fellow-Worker Filigno was given a preliminary hearing before Judge Mann and bound over in the Superior Court under two thousand dollars bond. Fellow-Worker John Pancner was adjudged guilty and sentenced to six months in the county jail. A change of venue was demanded on the strength of the judge's admitted prejudice and was granted for the conspiracy cases, but the street-speaking cases remained in the hands of a judge who stated that **"the right to speak is God-given and inalienable"** but that he **"would sentence any man for disorderly conduct who spoke or attempted to speak."** The conspiracy cases are now being tried before Judge Stocker, with progress up to the present as follows: E. J. Foote, James Wilson and James P. Thompson have been sentenced to six months in the county jail and A. E. Cousin to four months. Still to be tried are George Speed, Louis Gatewood, Charles Conner, William Douglass and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Appeals have been taken in all cases up to date and as the rest of us will probably get the same sentence appeals will be taken to a higher court and a jury trial.

I am certain the readers of the **Review** will appreciate for themselves the enormity of this injustice.

The Mullen case, one that should be heralded from coast to coast, is as follows: The court room was crowded one day and Officer Shannon was appointed to keep further spectators from coming in. A little fellow by the name of Mullen, not an I. W. W. man, presumably did not understand that the court room was closed and started in. Shannon instead of telling him the circumstances, grabbed him, kicked him and beat him continually down the stairs and through the hallway to the booking office of the jail, where he struck the man's head against the desk. The business in the court room was completely interrupted for at least ten minutes while the man's shrieks and agonized cries for mercy rang through the building. The judge suavely thanked

the spectators for their orderly behavior during "the disturbance." Mullen was kept in jail for three or four days, probably that he might recover his normal looks, and then was tried with the result that he was sentenced to thirty days, one hundred dollars fine and costs, in spite of the fact that four non-partisan witnesses testified to the man's quiet behavior and Officer Shannon's intense brutality.

Shannon is an old man on the force, has a reputation for being "a tough proposition" and is now so near his time for retirement that no matter what he does he will be retained on the force that he may draw his pension.

That such inhuman conduct is not uncommon among the police of Spokane is shown by the attack of Officer Meyers made upon a harmless drunkard a few weeks ago when he beat him into unconsciousness before a crowd of indignant citizens. Ernest Untermann was a witness to this incident. The citizens complained so strenuously to the Police Commissioner that Meyers was dismissed, but if he had attacked an I. W. W. man he would probably have been given a gold medal.

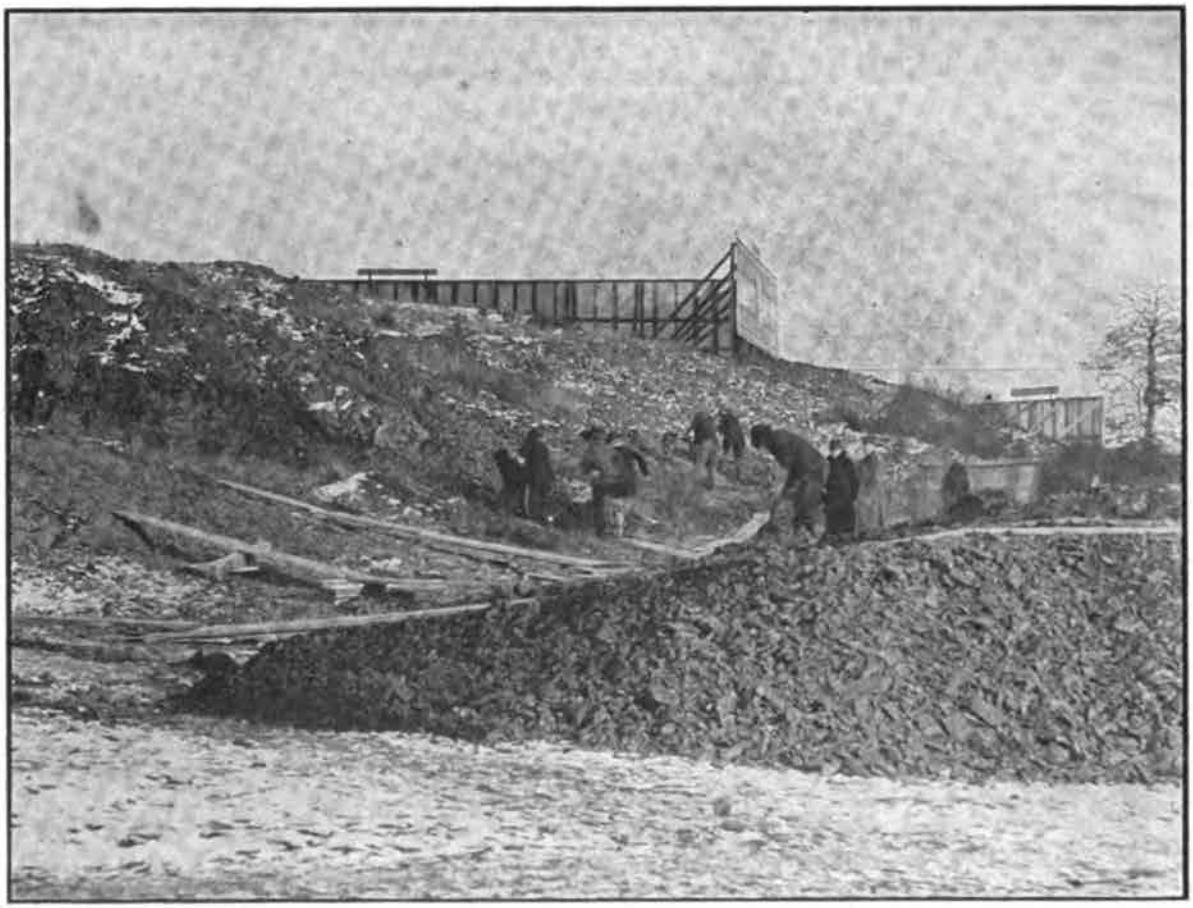
The Spokesman Review was very much excited over the fact that the I. W. W. "jail birds" insulted the Salvation Army. Of course their indignation turns to unctuous praise when Prosecuting Attorney Pugh designates James Wilson as a coward, a sneak and a liar, trying to whine out of his responsibilities. The Salvation Army has not the courage to continue its street meetings, but must come down to the city jail to talk to starving men who cannot get away. They did not put in an appearance on Thanksgiving day to feed the hungry or give drink to the thirsty, but like the hypocrite in the bible when asked for bread "they offered a stone." The insult was not that the I. W. W. boys howled at them and jeered them out of the place, the insult was that they ever dared to come at all. The Industrial Workers are interested in a live issue of better things for this world. As Mr. Pugh so aptly put it we are a modest aggregation "who, after they win the free-speech fight, intend to come back after the whole works."

Needless to say people who advise us to be contented and humble and look for our reward in heaven are not very popular when we're starving and suffering that we may get a little less hell on earth. If we are, as Mr. Pugh says, "the hoboes, tramps and ne'er-do-wells," then it is up to us to change our status right here and now.

The A. F. of L. Central Labor Council and the Socialist party are working earnestly on the initiative petition and it is progressing splendidly from all reports. The miners of Butte have followed up the action of the Coeur D'Alene district in boycotting Spokane and all her products. Damage suits have piled up against the city, many filed by indignant citi-

zens who were drenched by the hose of the fire department, others filed by members of the I. W. W. who have been assaulted by officers both in and out of jail. Needless to say all of these different activities have their result upon the opinions of the taxpayers and the business men. We can appeal to their pocketbook far more effectually than to their intelligence or sense of justice.

The newspapers have gloated over the fact that the switchmen's strike is helping to cripple the I. W. W. To a certain extent the influx of I. W. W. volunteers is certainly being delayed but the fight can never be lost when starved and beaten men will come out of jail and voluntarily offer to go back that the fight may not be lost. Such courage and endurance as the rebels have shown in this fight is almost beyond the comprehension of the average citizen. Particularly are they surprised at the "non-resistant" attitude, at the self-



OUT ON THE ROCK PILE.

control and splendid discipline under circumstances that would try the average man to desperation.

The hunger strike was called off by the unknown fighting committee for the reason that they felt the I. W. W. boys were practically committing suicide under the surveillance of a police force that were glad to see them do it. In a war there is no sense in doing what the

enemy want you to do. Some of the boys have gone on the rock pile and from now on others will probably go without being considered either traitors or cowards by the organization. The reason is that they can in this way get three square meals a day and fresh air to keep them in good fighting condition. As for work that will be rather a minus quantity, a sort of graceful shifting, of shovel or pick from one hand to the other.

This fight is on to the bitter end. It will never be settled for us until it is settled right. They may send us all to jail, but that will not stop the agitation for free speech. They may deport the I. W. W. men but the battle will not be crushed. Let sympathizers on the outside help to spread the news of this brutal conflict and express their sympathy in the coin of the realm. The great need of the hour is financial assistance. Readers of the Review are invited to contribute their share.

Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of the producers; they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil. * * * They distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labor-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of capital.—Karl Marx, in Vol. I of Capital.